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ELKTON FARM FIREHOLE REMOVAL

Zeitler Road, Elkton, Maryland

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ~ Region III

Site Description:

The Elkton Farm Firehole Site is located on Zeitler Road in Elkton, Maryland. The site consists of an open field that has historically been used for agricultural purposes but for a brief period during and around WW2. During this period of time, Triumph Industries, Inc., which manufactured military munitions during WW2, used about 32 acres of the field for the burning and disposal of waste explosives materials. The waste was placed into one or more pits in the field and then allowed to burn. Over the years, these materials were spread out over about 50 acres of the site. We will refer to the entire contaminated area as the "Firehole."

The exact location of the Firehole was not known until the early 1990's when the Department of Defense found historical documents from Triumph Industries giving an approximate location of the Firehole. After verifying the Firehole's existence, the State of Maryland requested EPA's assistance in cleaning up the Firehole. The contamination has been at the site for over 50 years and no casualties have occurred.



PHOTO LEFT: In February, EPA erected a fence and placed warning signs to keep curious individuals out of the contaminated area.

Contamination of the Firehole:

Likely contaminants at the site include soils polluted with TNT and unexploded Discarded Military Munitions (DMM) from the WW2 era. People would be at risk if they accidentally set off an unexploded DMM by walking on the area. The type of explosion that may result would be similar to lighting a cherry bomb, a formerly popular firework. There are no large incendiary devices onsite that would create a large explosion if detonated.

Cleanup of the Firehole:

EPA has begun an investigation to decide how to remove contamination from the Firehole portion of Elkton Farm. The first step in the investigation was a geophysical survey, completed in May 2005. The survey provided information regarding the scattered DMM material throughout the firehole area. The survey also provided the locations of metal and metal fragments. EPA then plotted these locations on a map.

The next steps are:

- 1) Lay a grid over the map of the firehole area and stake out the grid on land to keep track of each smaller area of contamination.
- 2) Go grid unit by grid unit and demilitarize the DMM and either rebury on-site or remove if necessary.

For More Information:

Visit EPA on the Internet. Site information is available at:
http://www.epaossc.org/site_profile.asp?site_id=1299

or contact EPA staff:

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